City of McAllen

McAllen, TX

Mayor Javier Villalobos

Pledge Summary

The City of McAllen is a city in south Texas with a population of roughly 142,000. It is the largest city in Hidalgo County of the Lower Rio Grande Valley, a region known for its high biodiversity and as an ecotourism destination. Mayor Javier Villalobos of McAllen, Texas has committed to conserving the monarch butterfly and the pollinator community that are so important to ecosystem and economic health. Mayor Villalobos looks forward to engaging residents and creating more pollinator habitat throughout the city.

Action Items Committed for 2022

Communications and Convening

- Issue a proclamation to raise awareness about the decline of the monarch butterfly and the species' need for habitat. This proclamation must incorporate a focus on monarch conservation.
- Launch or maintain a public communication effort to encourage residents to plant monarch gardens at their homes or in their neighborhoods. (If you have community members who speak a language other than English, we encourage you to also communicate in that language; Champion Pledges must communicate in that language.)
- Engage with gardening leaders and partners (e.g., Master Naturalists, Master Gardeners, Nature Centers, Native Plant Society Chapters , other long-standing and influential community leaders) to support monarch butterfly conservation.
- Create a community art project to enhance and promote monarch and pollinator conservation as well as cultural awareness and recognition.

Program and Demonstration Gardens

- Host or support a native seed or plant sale, giveaway or swap.
- Facilitate or support a milkweed seed collection and propagation effort.
- Plant milkweed and pollinator-friendly native nectar plants along roadsides, medians, or public rights-of-way.
- Launch or maintain an outdoor education program(s) (e.g., at schools, after-school programs, community centers and groups) that builds awareness and creates habitat by engaging students, educators, and the community in planting native milkweed and pollinator-friendly native nectar plants (i.e., National Wildlife Federation's Schoolyard Habitats program and Monarch Mission curriculum).
- Initiate or support community science (or citizen science) efforts that help monitor monarch migration and health.
- Host or support a monarch butterfly festival that is accessible to all residents in the community and promotes monarch and pollinator conservation, as well as cultural

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awareness and recognition.

Past Pledge Archive

Mayor Name	Program Year	Pledge Date	Achievement
Mayor Javier Villalobos	2026	12/2/2025	
Mayor Javier Villalobos	2025	12/10/2024	Leadership Circle
Major Javier Villalobos	2024	1/11/2024	Leadership Circle
Mayor Javier Villalobos	2023	3/30/2023	Leadership Circle
Mayor Javier Villalobos	2022	4/19/2022	Leadership Circle
Mayor Jim Darling	2021	3/19/2021	Leadership Circle

Action Items

In total, how many individuals have been reached through the Mayors' Monarch Pledge in your community this year (Jan-Dec)? Please limit your answer to only the number of individuals reached in the answer field below (Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only.).

12000

Of the total number of individuals engaged, how many youth (0-18) were reached through the Mayors' Monarch Pledge in your community this year (Jan. - Dec.)? If none, please write 0." (Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only.)

8000 youth, 4000 adults

In total, how many acres of monarch habitat have been created in your city in the last 12 months? Please limit your answer to only the number of acres in the answer field below (e.g., 3). Note: 1 acre = roughly the size of a football field.

7

Where was the habitat created this year? Example locations may include residences, schools, places of worship, rights-of-way, roadsides, community gardens, shared public spaces, and more.

roadsides, city parks, private residences

How are you leveraging the Mayors' Monarch Pledge program to engage marginalized communities, such as low-income communities or communities of color?

We operate in a region that is largely a community of color and is experiences significant poverty; over 90% Hispanic or Latino and our poverty rates are nearly triple that of the rest of the USA and over double that of Texas. All of our MMP efforts include reaching out to our community at-large, but especially with our programming for families and children.

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What was your community's motivation for taking and continuing to work on the Mayors' Monarch Pledge?

To continue to raise awareness and focus conservation efforts in distinguishable actions.

What resources have been most helpful to you thus far and what new resources would you like to see to help meet your goals? What resources would be useful to help expand equitable engagement in community processes and access to high-quality, usable nature?

NWF staff, in particular Dr. Rebeca Quiñonez-Piñón, have been important to accomplishing habitat creation and outreach goals.

What else should we know about your monarch butterfly conservation efforts over the last year?

Expanded our efforts to go beyond basic programming and to integrate Mayor's Monarch Pledge goals to other city projects

Selected Action Items

Plant milkweed and pollinator-friendly native nectar plants along roadsides, medians, or public rights-of-way.

Where are the medians, roadsides and public rights-of-way? (Please provide an address or coordinates, if possible, or describe the location)

How many milkweed and pollinator-friendly native nectar plants were planted? (Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only)

What is the total acreage of median and public right-of-way that has been planted with milkweed and pollinator-friendly native nectar plants? Note: 1 acre = roughly the size of a football field.

Please describe the maintenance schedule for these planted areas.

Launch or maintain an outdoor education program(s) (e.g., at schools, after-school programs, community centers and groups) that builds awareness and creates habitat by engaging students, educators, and the community in planting native milkweed and pollinator-friendly native nectar plants (i.e., National Wildlife Federation's Schoolyard Habitats program and Monarch Mission curriculum).

What program was launched or maintained to complete this effort? If you are involved with another National Wildlife Federation program, please mention that below. (Please include a link to the program, if possible)

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How many schools, community groups, leaders, or centers were engaged in this effort? How many of these collaborations and partnerships are "new"? (Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only)

Please list the names of the schools you are working with.

What resources, if any, are you providing to educators?

How many students and educators would you estimate are being reached? Please limit your answer to only number of adults and youths engaged in the answer field (e.g., 200 students and 20 educators).

What community organizations, groups, or leaders (if any) did you partner with or engage to complete this effort?

How many acres of monarch and pollinator habitat have been planted through this effort? Please limit your answer to only the number of acres in the answer field below (e.g., 0.5 acres). For reference, 1 acre = 43,560 square feet and is about the size of a football field without the end zones. Note: 1 acre = roughly the size of a football field.

What is the maintenance schedule to ensure planted habitat is maintained?

Issue a proclamation to raise awareness about the decline of the monarch butterfly and the species' need for habitat. This proclamation must incorporate a focus on monarch conservation.

Date of Proclamation:

03/29/2022

Title of Proclamation (i.e. – Monarch Day or Pollinator Week):

Mayor's Monarch Pledge Day

Upload a copy of your proclamation.

Mayors Monarch Pledge Day 2022 (proclamation).pdf

Launch or maintain a public communication effort to encourage residents to plant monarch gardens at their homes or in their neighborhoods. (If you have community members who speak a language other than English, we encourage you to also communicate in that language; Champion Pledges must communicate in that language.)

Upload any relevant documents, images, or other attachments related to your effort on this action.

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Gardening for People & Wildlife.png

Upload any relevant documents, images, or other attachments related to your effort on this action.

monarch & milkweed FB post.png

Upload any relevant documents, images, or other attachments related to your effort on this action.

RGvision magazine article.png

Please describe the methods of public communication below (e.g., printed materials, social media, print media).

We integrate monarch and milkweed education into an array of programming, in addition to media outreach, to inform and encourage residents on how to take actions that help monarchs and other pollinators. Attached are several examples of our public communications, which included workshops about gardening for wildlife (with specific references to monarchs), social media posts, and articles shared in several local publications.

Engage with gardening leaders and partners (e.g., Master Naturalists, Master Gardeners, Nature Centers, Native Plant Society Chapters , other long-standing and influential community leaders) to support monarch butterfly conservation.

Upload any relevant documents, images, or other attachments related to your effort on this action.

Pollinator Patches.pdf

How many community organizations and groups participated? Please list them below.

Texas Master Naturalists (Rio Grande Valley Chapter & South Texas Border Chapter), US Fish & Wildlife Service (Santa Ana NWR), Texas Parks and Wildlife (Estero Llano Grande SP & Resaca De La Palma SP), UT Rio Grande Valley (Entomology Lab), Texas Master Gardeners (Hidalgo County).

Please describe the extent of engagement with these groups and their monarch butterfly conservation efforts.

The Texas Master Naturalists, US Fish & Wildlife Service, Texas Parks & Wildlife, and UT Rio Grande Valley all supported monarch conservation through educational outreach at the City of McAllen's Monarch Fest 2022. We also engaged with the Texas Master Gardeners to conduct a pilot project called "Pollinator Patches". We gave packets of seeds feature all native forbs and graminoids to chapter members to grow in their yards. The goals for the Pollinator Patches are to: (1) better understand which species do well in typical yards in the

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region, (2) assess how sowing date affects plant growth and bloom), and (3) to gather data on which insect species (particularly pollinators) use the patches.

Create a community art project to enhance and promote monarch and pollinator conservation as well as cultural awareness and recognition.

What community organizations, groups, or leaders (if any) did you partner with or engage to host the event?

National Wildlife Federation, McAllen City Commission, Hidalgo County, and Friends of Quinta Mazatlan.

How many individuals were engaged in this effort? Please limit your answer to only the number of individuals reached in the answer field (Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only, e.g. 50).

5000

Please describe the community art project that was implemented in your community and how it contributed to cultural awareness and recognition (e.g., number of art installations, type of art).

We partnered with the National Wildlife Federation on a grant to bring mural Irving Cano to paint a two-wall mural at Quinta Mazatlan in McAllen, TX. The walls are in a prominent location at the nature center and is in clear view for school field trips and general public guests to see. We hosted a mural completion celebration, which was attended by the Mayor of McAllen (Javier Villalobos), city commissioners, Hidalgo County commissioner, McAllen Independent School District board of trustee, and other local dignitaries. The murals showcase the monarch butterfly and include aspects of its lifecycle and the importance of milkweeds. It also has significant cultural value, deftly woven in by Irving Cano of Mexico. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VpgMCB5QZbs https://www.nwf.org/Home/Latest-News/Press-Releases/2022/8-17-22-Destino-Monarca-Monarch-Mural https://riograndeguardian.com/villalobos-unveils-monarch-butterfly-mural-created-by-renowned-mexican-artist/

Host or support a native seed or plant sale, giveaway or swap.

Upload any relevant documents, images, or other attachments related to your effort on this action.

KMB Texas Recycles Tree Giveaway.png

Upload any relevant documents, images, or other attachments related to your effort on this action.

tree giveaway flyer.jpg

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Upload any relevant documents, images, or other attachments related to your effort on this action.

tree giveaway.png

How many plants were sold and/or given away at your event? (Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only)

2150

How many people attended your event? (Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only)

6000

What community organizations, groups, or leaders (if any) did you partner with or engage to host the event?

Heep's LRGV Native Plant Nursery, La Maceta Nursery and Ecoscaping, Keep McAllen Beautiful, Center for Urban Ecology

Facilitate or support a milkweed seed collection and propagation effort.

Upload any relevant documents, images, or other attachments related to your effort on this action.

Milkweed propagation FB post.png

How many people attended your event? (Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only)

10

What species were collected or propagated?

Zizotes Milkweed (Asclepias oenotheroides)

What community organizations, groups, or leaders (if any) did you partner with or engage to host the event?

Quinta Mazatlan

Please describe the milkweed seed collection and propagation effort that you hosted.

We contributed to milkweed seed collection and propagation at Quinta Mazatlan. We planted two additional patches of native milkweeds (>20 individuals per patch) on-site. We collected seed from plants in those patches and propagated them for future milkweed plantings.

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Initiate or support community science (or citizen science) efforts that help monitor monarch migration and health.

Upload any relevant documents, images, or other attachments related to your effort on this action.

Monarch iNaturalist info.png

Upload any relevant documents, images, or other attachments related to your effort on this action.

City Nature Challenge 2022 Basic Flyer.png

How many estimated individuals participated in your community science effort? Please limit your answer to only the number of individuals reached in the answer field (Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only, e.g. 150).

250

What community organizations, groups, or leaders (if any) did you partner with or engage to complete this effort?

Texas Parks & Wildlife, Texas Master Naturalists (Rio Grande Valley Chapter and South Texas Border Chapter).

Please describe the community science program that you supported or initiated. Provide a link to any relevant programs, if possible.

We support community science for monarch butterflies in two main ways. First, we organized the City Nature Challenge 2022 in the Rio Grande Valley. This project, while not exclusively for monarch monitoring, helps contribute observations during the bioblitz, and also recruits participants to use iNaturalist outside of the City Nature Challenge project. There were an additional 148 observations of monarchs added to iNaturalist from the region this year. Second, we go through and add life stage annotations to each monarch observation, which contributes local phenological data about monarchs. For example, we can use the knowledge that monarchs are mostly found in the region during migration (in spring, mostly March, in fall, October and November) to plan which nectar plants we use while restoring/re-wilding habitats - e.g., Crucita (Chromolaena odorata) and Southern Seaside Goldenrod (Solidago mexicana).

Host or support a monarch butterfly festival that is accessible to all residents in the community and promotes monarch and pollinator conservation, as well as cultural awareness and recognition.

Upload any relevant documents, images, or other attachments related to your effort on this action.

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Monarch Festival flyer (jpeg).jpg

Upload any relevant documents, images, or other attachments related to your effort on this action.

Monarch Fest 2022 (89) - Copy.jpg

Upload any relevant documents, images, or other attachments related to your effort on this action.

Monarch Fest 2022 (46).jpg

Upload any relevant documents, images, or other attachments related to your effort on this action.

Monarch Fest 2022 (25).jpg

Upload any relevant documents, images, or other attachments related to your effort on this action.

Monarch Fest 2022 (11).jpg

How many estimated individuals attended the event? Please limit your answer to only the number of individuals reached in the answer field ((Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only), e.g. 500)

2000

What was the date of your festival?

April 2, 2022

What community organizations, groups, or leaders (if any) did you partner with or engage to complete this effort?

Quinta Mazatlan, Friends of Quinta Mazatlan, Texas Parks and Wildlife, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Texas Master Naturalists, UT Rio Grande Valley, and more.

Please describe the details of your monarch butterfly festival and how you ensured the event was accessible by all residents in the community (e.g., events, length, notable successes, outreach, location).

We hosted Monarch Fest 2022 at Quinta Mazatlan in McAllen, TX on April 2, 2022 from 9 am - 2 pm. During the Monarch Fest, guests were offered a variety of fun, educational, and inspirational activities. They included educational booths with interactive features from local conservation organizations so guests could learn about monarch butterflies, pollinators, and other local native plants and wildlife. We offered guided garden tours so that guests could see how native plants looked in a landscaped environment and get ideas for how to

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incorporate them into their spaces. We also hosted educational presentations on insects and native plants. We designed the event so that local scouts could complete activities towards earning badges, hosted native plant sales, had food and other local vendors selling their wares, and offered many different hands-on crafts for guests.

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